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UM's South Campus Was Cover

How the CIA Operated in Dade

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To outsiders, the assortment of aged office buildings and warehouses at the University of Miami's South Campus was known as Zenith Technological Services, an obscure electronics firm doing weapons systems research for the Defense Department.

Insiders called it JM WAVE, the code name for what was at the time the Central Intelligence Agency's largest installation anywhere in the world outside its headquarters in Langley, Va.

THE SECLUDED, heavily wooded 1,571 acres of the research campus was headquarters for a reported 400 officers of the CIA's clandestine services branch, their specialties ranging from paramilitary operations to propaganda.

Around the Cuba watch, they began in 1962 — and which continues today, albeit at a greatly reduced level — there swirled a mystique woven of both mystery and myth.

Fantastic tales of assassination squads trained in the Florida swamps — stories the agency cate-

First of Two Parts

gorically denies, but which nevertheless continue to be the focus of published reports — commingle with such confirmed facts as the CIA's maintenance in Miami of a 200-man Cuban secret police force. There developed in Miami a reign of intrigue mentality reminiscent of Casablanca: the agency both fed upon and nourished it. It would lead a decade later, to four Miami Cubans thinking of the Watergate

burglary as just another in the series of jobs they had done for "La Compania."

FOR A WHILE, generally from 1962 through 1968, the agency would become among South Florida's largest employers, its Cuban agents — called "amots" in code — numbering in the thousands. It maintained hundreds of pieces of real estate, from dives to palatial homes, as "safe houses." Its armada, including everything from small craft to yachts donated by millionaires, constituted what a former

CIA officer says was "the third largest navy in the Western Hemisphere."

During the 1960s, the affair would touch a broad section of the community, including everyday citizens who would become swept up in it. "You've got to take into account your entire political scene," says an ex-CIA officer. "There was no anti-CIA activity in the country at that time. There was no pro-Castro activity."

It was in this atmosphere that

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How the CIA Operated in Dade County

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the University of Miami would allow its research campus to be used for cover for six years. Or a "dialogue" would be established between the CIA and local newspaper reporters, with protection of the CIA cover an implicit part of the bargain.

Dozens of lawyers would be drafted to do the paperwork for nearly 60 CIA front companies — sometimes in their chagrin when the true purpose of the company surfaced. "He'd say in the incorporation papers, 'This will be a general purpose business dealing with marine hardware,'" recalls the former CIA man. "How the hell did he know that marine hardware meant a terrorist submarine?"

Now, as the Rockefeller Commission and congressional committees investigate the agency, prompted by The New York Times disclosure (and the agency's subsequent acknowledgment) of domestic spying activities, it is still difficult to say the truth about the CIA's activities in Miami, its largest-ever domestic outpost.

THE AGENCY'S only archives are top secret. Even more than 10 years after the fact, the financial details — how many were on the payroll, what did the Cuban Adventure cost — are not made public.

At least two clandestine services officers are known to have been enrolled as graduate students at the University of Miami during the late 1960s, the period when the agency became involved in surveillance of the U.S. press. But CIA officials demur from discussing whether any such activities took place in "this matter, which is the investigation (by the Rockefeller Commission) and it is not appropriate for us to comment on it," a spokesman explained.

Even the CIA's supposedly "overt" office in Miami — a state-of-the-art function no more sinister than to interview U.S. citizens returning from abroad — is acknowledged only by the phone book listing of a number without an address.

The phone rings in a small glass office building partly owned by Kermit Roosevelt, grandson of a former high-ranking CIA officer. Other tenants include multi-national corporations, a computer warfare firm and the consulting firm of a former CIA undercover man. A business directory lists the office as being a "real estate firm." "It's overt," said an agency spokesman, "but there are limits."

WHAT LIMITS there were on the WAVE's activities are not known, although sources say its primary mission, beginning in 1962, was to reassess the CIA's approach to Cuba in the wake of the Bay of Pigs invasion. The CIA's rising young executives, at 34 already "senior," were the CIA's "army general." (Since he is still active, occasionally abroad, the CIA said that his background, European and headquarters, was vastly different from that of the officers who had executed the Bay of Pigs operation. They were largely old Latin America hands, many of whom had participated in the successful, though less complex, Guatemalan coup in 1954. He brought "a fresh perspective."

Following the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion, says a senior U.S. government official with firsthand knowledge of the situation, "it would be safe to say that (President Kennedy) was not interested in having that type of operation run until there was some indication it would be successful. . . . (The administration) still wanted another look to be taken at Cuba — as an intelligence problem, rather than a paramilitary problem."

The CIA's clandestine services branch, however, historically has never contented itself with simple intelligence gathering; its operatives have infiltrated governments, engineered coups, engaged in sabotage and orchestrated propaganda campaigns both in the U.S. and abroad. All segments of the branch were represented in the Miami operation (although the former CIA officer says the paramilitary specialists were downgraded to "running a taxi service" for Cuban exile agents between Florida and Cuba).

For such a massive operation, the CIA needed a headquarters. The South Campus — a secluded, one-time Navy blimp base the University of Miami was leasing from the government and soon hoped to buy — provided an ideal site for "Zenith Technological Services." Two CIA officials visited the university and asked if UM officials could lease the tract to the CIA, located on SW 152nd Street west of Perrine. The answer was yes. That was immediately before Henry King Stanford became president of the University in 1962.

STANFORD, WHO says he thought the operation really was an electronics firm ("That's what it was on our books"), says he would have had no objection to doing business directly with the CIA. He regarded it as producing income for a sorely pressed university. Just how much income the lease produced between 1962 and 1968, Stanford will not say. The lease agreements, he says, are classified. "Whatever it was, it wasn't enough, considering our budget situation." He said the lease in no way affected the school's academic or research programs.

This was not the only dealing between the agency and the University of Miami and its personnel. Here are others:

● The University of Miami Press published in 1972 a book containing a CIA clandestine services officer's essay on Castro's relationship to other Latin American communists. He was identified in the book as being a U.S. diplomat — the way



Zenith Building - 'Electronics Research' Was Actually CIA

he identified himself to university officials when got his 1968 master's degree through the school's Center for Advanced International Studies, officials say. If they had known his true identity, say both Stanford and the book's editor, they would have included it in any case, neither Stanford nor officials at the Center say they object to having published a CIA man's work as long as the scholarship and conclusions were valid.

● From 1961 through 1965, Professor John Dyer, a Latin American marketing specialist, worked part-time for the CIA, interviewing businessmen and other professors upon their return from conferences abroad. Stanford says he was not aware of Dyer's employment. (Once the overt office was established in Miami, Dyer was phased out and replaced by fulltime intelligence officers. Dyer is still at the university.)

● With Dyer's help, the CIA in 1961 resettled a defecting Czechoslovakian spy, Lt. Col. Frantisek Tisler, under the assumed identity of Frank Laurent, an art student at the university. The school subsequently hired him for its graphics department. He worked there until his death in 1971.

● In 1960, seeking to both help the CIA and get a tax break, horse racing millionaire P.A.B. Widener donated a 60-foot motor launch, The Matusa Time (named after a fine Cuban rum), to the International Oceanographic Foundation — for use by the agency. The foundation, headed by Dr. F. G. Walton Smith, then also director of the university's Institute of Marine Science, leased the ship to a CIA front company. Both a source and Dr. Smith recall that the CIA suggested the ship be provided free of charge — but that Dr. Smith insisted on being paid. "That was a little bit of impertinence on their part," Dr. Smith recalls. "The reason why we should support the CIA." The ship was used, according to the source, as a floating propaganda station. Widener, interviewed recently in

his box at Hialeah Race Course, said he could neither confirm or deny that he intended the ship for the CIA's use. He noted that such disclosures are punishable by a \$10,000 fine and a 10-year jail sentence.

The South Campus, beginning in late 1961, became under the CIA something of a white collar garrison, a nerve center into which information flowed and out of which went orders and, when necessary, ammunition. Gray-uniformed guards patrolled the perimeter. The Cuban hirelings were not permitted there, lest they meet a CIA officer they didn't have a "need to know." It was all very professionally, very coolly done.

Gonz was some of the hell-for-leather romanticism that infected the Bay of Pigs preparations — on the payroll types were in — control. In its place was a precision mentality focusing on the Soviet buildup in Cuba. Another paramilitary attack had originally been among the options. As the nuclear threat to the U.S. became evident, it ceased to be one: detecting and gauging that threat became the state's preoccupation — and its greatest accomplishment.

ALTHOUGH the abandoning of any plan to invade Cuba "wasn't even discussed because it was so self-evident," recalls the senior official, there is some question about just how clearly this was articulated to the Cuban exiles. Indeed, there is question about just how strictly this was enforced, even though the Kennedy Administration had told the CIA, FBI and (eventually) to squelch any unauthorized expeditions.

Says the former CIA officer: "At first, Kennedy tells Cuba: 'We will not invade Cuba.' He didn't say 'The Cubans won't invade.' Then he came and said, 'Rock the stuff off.' (When Bernard Barker, one of the Miami Watergate burglars, encountered an old Bay of Pigs comrade, jailed for violating U.S. neutrality

laws in a free-lance raid against Cuba. "Chico," the somewhat confused prisoner complained to Barker. "The Americans, they are not like they used to be.")

Throughout much of the 1960s, though, the exile community was kept in something of a state of red alert. A well-armed, mysteriously financed group of commandos, headed by Bay of Pigs leader Manuel Artima, staged hit-and-run guerrilla raids against Cuba from a base in Costa Rica through early 1965. And a Castro spy, Elmed in Havana that he learned of \$4,000 a month payments to Artima by the CIA. The government source described Artima's role as both "more militant at certain times than U.S. policy makers" and as a "gray area" in the anti-Castro efforts of the m-40s.

IN JAMA, even after Artima's Revolutionary Recovery Movement (RRM) closed its Costa Rican base in 1965, citing a loss of "operational assistance," the CIA continued to maintain a 200-man cadre of secret police in exile, ready to be shipped to Cuba to establish an instant, U.S. ministry of the interior should the occasion present itself. Not until 1969 or 1970 was the group dissolved. After that, a small "residual cadre" was kept on the payroll, said the senior official.

Members of that group were used to interview Cuban refugees arriving at Ops-locks airport aboard the Freedom Flights. Others performed counter-intelligence functions in Miami, although there is some dispute among sources as to how frequent their operations were.

The senior official says they were directed primarily to spot Castro agents in Miami, reporting them to their CIA case officers so the Cuban spies could be approached — and perhaps convinced to become double agents for the United States. In some cases, said the former CIA officer, when such approaches were made, "it wasn't without any hope of success. It was to let Castro know that they couldn't move without our being there."

THE FORMER CIA officer, however, also says that the Cuban cadre commanded by the late Jose Masferrer Sempere-Pedron, a mysterious exile who had been the equivalent to an IRS agent in Batista Cuba, and who died in 1973 — was more aggressive. "They maintained their own files. They had their own letters coming out of Cuba."

The agency also maintained a group of Cubans who specialized in paramilitary activities such as running agents and weapons between Miami and Cuba and conducting hit-and-run sabotage raids. Eugenio Martinez, another of the Watergate burglars, was a member of this group and is said to have undertaken 250 missions.

After the group was disbanded, Martinez was kept on a \$100 monthly retainer which continued until his arrest during the Watergate investigation.

Although the retainer, according to the government source, was for remaining one of the CIA's "eyes and ears" in the Cuban community, there is evidence he may have been doing more. Watergate committee hearings revealed that in 1972 Martinez was still reporting to his case officer about "maritime activities."

How extensive the paramilitary operations were in Miami in the 1960s is unknown. Although sources say the station's primary function was intelligence gathering, there are recurring reports of such bizarre activities as the schooling of assassination squads targeted against Castro. Such reports, although staunchly denied by the agency, have gained some credence because of several factors.

ONE OF THOSE factors is the unconfirmed reports by CBS News and The Washington Post that President Ford is fearful that current investigation of the CIA might uncover its role in several assassination plots. Another is the July 1972 article in Atlantic Monthly in which a former aide to the late President Lyndon Johnson quoted Johnson as saying: "We had been operating a damned Murder Inc. in the Caribbean." Still others are references in two current books about the CIA.

In "Inside the Company: A CIA Diary," disaffected former officer, Philip B.F. Agge says that his station chief in Montevideo related to him his first-hand involvement in planning the 1961 assassination of Dominican Republic dictator Rafael Trujillo. Agge quotes the station chief, who is now dead, as saying it was carried out by Cuban exiles from Miami. In another passage in his book, not yet published in the U.S., Agge says that he tried to Cuban exiles to render Cuba from Quito, Ecuador, in 1961. According to Agge, the man's mission was directed from Miami and was subsequently revealed as an assassination plot following his arrest by Cuban police.

In "The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence" by Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, CIA censors ordered deleted a seven-line passage apparently dealing with an assassination proposal involving Castro. Not deleted was a footnote to that

passage. It began: "Assassination of Castro seemed to be a recurrent idea in the CIA during those years . . ."

IN THE POST-BAY of Pigs era, however, the government source says that assassination of Castro was never given any serious thought by CIA staff officers, although acknowledging that Cuban exiles proposed it regularly. "We did not encourage them in this sort of activity," he said. "Constantly, however, this was a theme among them that a solution to the Cuban problem was to assassinate Castro. At that period of time I'm sure that somebody was around with a proposal a week to work it out in some fashion." That, however, he said, was not in the charter of the Miami operation.

One thing that was in the charter of the Miami station, however, according to the source was to keep abreast of everything the Cuban exile community was planning — thwarting random acts of violence while at the same time encouraging — sometimes actively, sometimes tacitly — such activities as the picketing of foreign flag vessels trafficking with Cuba.

The demonstrations were part of a massive propaganda effort, orchestrated by the covert action section of the station, which as late as 1966 was aiding in the publishing of such books as books, in Spanish, detailing the Castro intelligence service's operations and identifying its Miami public relations consultant who was then in the printing business and who published some of the newspaper: "Where the people got the money to pay me, I don't know. . . . Those were the best customers at the time. . . . I never asked the question, because it was none of my business to ask. . . . But you could sense that (the CIA) was behind it."

The effort was an intense one. "Because Castro was bad," says the former CIA officer, "he had to be painted black. . . . You had to keep churning that stuff out."

JM WAVE HAS over the years, withdrew, even though through 1974 it was provided over by a high-ranking CIA officer who had played a major role in the Bay of Pigs operation. (The job of station chief here was his last assignment before retirement.)

The old JM WAVE headquarters, the heavily wooded one time blimp base, was abandoned by the agency in late 1968 as it moved its offices to North Dade. Stanford never even realized his hope of acquiring the property for the University.

The U.S. General Services Administration ordered the school to vacate it in late 1970, establishing the area as temporary office space for government agencies ranging from the Department of the Interior to Army reserve companies. Finally, it is being turned over to Metropolitan Dade County in a ceremony scheduled for next Friday. Metro is planning to build a zoo there.

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